

Every Child Learning Every Day



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An early childhood newsletter from the State Department of Education

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READY TO LEARN

Books on basics fun

By Dr. Stan Steiner

Childhood is filled with great wonders and play, but nothing replaces meeting a child's basic needs. Here are some books that address the basics.

"The Going to Bed Book,"

Sandra Boynton, 2004, Little Simon. Boynton's familiar whimsical characters are as entertaining today as they were for past generations.

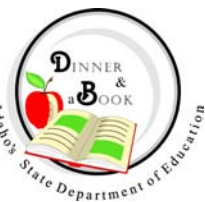
"Where Did That Baby Come From?" by Debi Gliori, 2004, Harcourt. The arrival of a new baby presents many questions for older siblings who are used to getting all the attention.

Older sibling's hilarious possibilities associated with the origin of this baby will have everyone smiling and relieved with the final solution.

"A Child is a Child," by Brigitte Weninger and illustrated by Eve Tharlet, 2004, Penguin. There are some things that are universal when it comes to taking care of little ones. This charming story finds two small frogs temporarily without parents until the other animals offer a helping hand.

"Hide & Seek," by Janet Wong and illustrated by Margaret Chodos-Irvine, 2005, Harcourt. Playing hide and seek is a favorite with all children. Wong & Chodos-Irvine combine a favorite game, counting and inviting illustrations that capture the wonder of a creative child and a playful parent.

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Share your views about child care issues

Dear Reader:

The Idaho Legislature is in session as this newsletter is being produced. So far the needs of preschool children and their parents haven't been front burner issues.

In recent years, early childhood issues have not received much attention as state lawmakers wrestled with difficult budgets. This year, some legislation has been proposed to update day care licensing standards, and I hope to see some legislation passed clarifying the role of public schools in providing preschool.

But I don't expect we'll hear a thoughtful discussion this session about the needs of our youngest children.

Quality preschool and daycare services are essential to our state as an estimated 65,000 parents rely on these services in order to work or operate busi-



Dr. Marilyn Howard
Superintendent of Public Instruction

nesses. Quality services are vital for the future success of children in school and life.

It is time that Idaho engage in a meaningful discus-

sion about what our expectations are for the services provided.

Bringing these issues to the table depends on concerned parents and early childhood service providers engaging in the debate.

Next month provides two opportunities for communities to engage in conversations with policy makers about the needs of young children and their parents.

Those events are "The Week of The Young Child," April 3-9 and "The Day of the Child or Dia de Los Ninos April 30."

I encourage you to use these opportunities to share your concerns, identify what needs you see, and suggest ideas for improvements.

Ensuring that parents in Idaho have access to quality programs will require grassroots efforts.

READY TO LEARN

Initiative targets parents of 2005 babies

Parents of babies born this year in Idaho will be the target of a new literacy initiative funded by Congress and coordinated by Lee Pesky Center in Boise.

The Lee Pesky Learning Center, a non-profit organization specializing in helping individuals with learning disabilities, in February announced the launch of a historic statewide initiative — Literacy Matters — to improve early childhood literacy throughout Idaho.

A key part of the initiative is distributing the Lee Pesky Center publication "Every Child Ready to Read — Literacy Tips for Parents."

"Every Child Ready to Read" is an easy-to-use resource that contains fun, effective and proven methods for learning.

Center staff are currently developing a strategy to distrib-



ute the book to more than 20,000 Idaho newborns, and to track their progress over the next several

years.

Distribution of "Every Child Ready to Read — Literacy Tips for Parents" is expected to begin in the fall of 2005.

This will be the first time that all Idaho children are exposed at birth to this critical information, and that parents and caregivers are provided with the tools to foster better literacy skills in children.

The federal government has shown its support of Literacy Matters by awarding a congressional appropriation to fund statewide distribution of the publication in both English and Spanish,

and to study its impact in the years between the crib and the classroom.

Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson recognized the need to get this resource into the hands of every new parent, and led initial efforts to secure the appropriation.

"It is our hope that the Literacy Matters Initiative continues to grow not only in Idaho, but will also serve as a model to other states," said Hildegarde Ayer, executive director of the Lee Pesky Learning Center. "We are committed to making this an ongoing effort to improve early childhood literacy throughout the Gem State, and with help from the state and federal government look forward to making that happen."

For more information about the book visit www.lplearningcenter.org.



RESOURCES

Celebrate young children next month

What is the Week of the Young Child?

It is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association, with over 100,000 members and a network of nearly 450 local, state, and regional affiliates.

The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

NAEYC first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971, recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life.

What is the Week of the Young Child theme?

The theme for the April 3-9, 2005 Week of the Young Child is Children's Opportunities — Our Responsibilities.

Who sponsors the Week of the Young Child?

NAEYC designates the Week of the Young Child dates and theme, but events are planned and implemented by local communities. Celebrations are organized and coordinated by regional, state, and local NAEYC Affiliates, and by individual early childhood programs and community organizations providing services to young children and families.

Local communities may tailor celebrations to meet their own needs. However adapted, the central purpose remains unchanged — to promote the needs of young children, their families, and the early childhood programs that serve them.

More information and ideas on how to celebrate the week are available at <http://www.naeyc.org>.



Program supports food in day care

CACFP is the Child and Adult Care Food Program, a federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks to children and adults receiving day care. It plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care and making it more affordable for many low-income families.

CACFP reimburses participating centers and day care homes for their meal costs. It is administered at the Federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The state education or health department administers CACFP in

most states. Independent centers and sponsoring organizations enter into agreements with their state agencies to operate the program.

Public or private nonprofit child care centers, Head Start programs, and for-profit centers that are licensed or approved to provide day care may serve meals and snacks to infants and children through CACFP.

CACFP provides reimbursement for meals and snacks served to small groups of children receiving nonresidential day care (commonly known as Family Day Care Homes) in licensed or approved private homes. A family or group day care home must sign an agreement with a spon-

soring organization to participate in CACFP.

The sponsoring organization organizes training, conducts monitoring, and helps with planning menus and filling out reimbursement forms.

Parents who place their young children in day care with a center or home that is participating under the CACFP can be assured that their children are receiving safe, nutritious meals and snacks that meet the USDA meal pattern.

To find a day care facility in your area or neighborhood, or if you wish to participate as a family day care home provider or center, call the State Department of Education and ask for the Child Nutrition Programs at 208-332-6821.

READY TO LEARN

Rhymes are fun ways to develop literacy skills

Exposure to poems, music, and rhymes is important to help young children develop listening and reading skills. Trips in the car, bedtime, and bath time are good opportunities to sing together.

Birth to 1 year — You can sing to your baby from the moment he is born or before. Don't worry about singing well. As your baby grows, sing and play with his toes, fingers, and hands.

Play "This Little Piggy," where you wiggle each finger or toe for each pig in the rhyme.

1 to 3 years old — This is a great age to sing and play "10 Little Fingers" or "10 Little Indians"

with your child. Make sure you demonstrate the song by holding up your fingers along with the song. This also helps to build number skills.

3 to 5 years old — Encourage your child to sing along with songs. Play with the lyrics of songs you know well. For example, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star ..." can be "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Car."

Skills needed for kindergarten — Understand that some words sound the same. Repeat rhymes. Sing simple songs and do simple finger plays.

ARTS

Building a library helps foster art skills

By Jennifer Williams
2002 Idaho Teacher of the Year

March is finally here with daffodils, crocus, and tulips popping up alongside some other "pop-ups" of the season ... YARD SALE signs!

I say, let's enjoy them both and make the experience an educational one for your preschooler.

First create a space for books in your home. It is never too early to start building a library of books. Designate an area and let your preschooler help to build the shelves (great for fine tuning motor skills), and color a sign for his "library."

Start shopping at yard sales. These are great places to pick inexpensive books.

Make it a game to find a funny book, pretty book, happy book, or one that just feels good. And begin to build a library where the child can take full

ownership.

Building a library at an early age plants the seed that books are special, and increases parent involvement.

Your little preschooler can even learn to spot the yard sale signs. Make sure to talk about the shapes and colors of signs you see.

Also plan for a trip to other libraries and check out books.

Building a library also supports art skills, as preschoolers learn from watching others and doing activities with supervision.

It helps encourage children to identify, explore, and experiment with materials.

Talking about color and shape of signs and materials used for the library increases their "art" vocabulary and create an appreciation of textures.